

## SEMESTRE 1 – ANGLAIS

### Fiche 2 : Brexit

#### 1) What is Brexit?

It is a portmanteau word, built out of "British" and "exit" (just like "Grexit" before it), and it refers to the **withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union**.

Brexit happened on June 23, **2016**, when Britain voted to leave the European Union.

#### 2) What were the results?

**Britain: 52% for Leave, 48% for Remain**

**England: 53% for Leave, 47% for Remain**

**Wales: 53% for Leave, 47% for Remain**

**Northern Ireland: 56% for Remain, 44% for Leave**

**Scotland: 62% for Remain, 38% for Leave**

#### 3) When was Brexit supposed to take place?

Then Prime Minister **Theresa May** triggered the process of leaving the EU on 29 March **2017**. According to Article 50 of the Rome Treaty, that negotiation process lasts two years, so the intention was for the UK to leave the EU on 29 March 2019.

#### 4) When did it actually happen? Why is the date different?

The end of the process was delayed by deadlock in the **UK Parliament** after the June 2017 general election resulted in an unexpected hung parliament, and a majority of parliament rejected, in January 2019, the **Brexit deal** Theresa May's team had negotiated with EU representatives. May submitted the agreement again twice, in February and March, but both times a majority of parliament voted against it.

Following May's request of an extension, Brexit was postponed to 12 April 2019. On 10 April, as UK parliament was still in a deadlock, the date was postponed again, to 31 October. In the meantime, Theresa May resigned, and **Boris Johnson** replaced her at the head of the Conservative Party and the British government. He submitted to the parliament's vote a new deal, which took some elements of May's deal but some new, different provisions had been negotiated with the EU.

This new deal was **rejected again by parliament**. As a result, a general election was held in December 2019. The Conservatives won and expanded their majority. With Boris Johnson still Prime Minister, the UK Parliament finally ratified the withdrawal agreement, and the UK left the EU on 31 January 2020.

The EU-UK relationship then entered a transition period that was initially set to end on 31 December 2020, and during which the UK and EU were negotiating their future relationship. The UK remained subject to EU law and remained part of the **EU customs** union and single market during the transition, but it was no longer part of the EU's political bodies and institutions.

Due both to strong disagreements between the British government and EU negotiators, and to the various complications created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the negotiations lagged, and as its end was nearing, two prospects were becoming more and more likely: **an extension of the transition period, or a no-deal Brexit.**

In the end (on 25 December 2020), a deal was found and signed between the EU and UK, and the end of the transition period took place, as planned, on **31 January 2020**. Since then, however, Brexit, and several disputes that have not been resolved by the trade deal, have caused **tensions** with the EU, and **economic problems** for the UK (and the latter have been worsened by the effects of the COVID-19 crisis).